

" THE INFIDEL "

BY

JOHN KAISER.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

WILLIAM MORRIS Minister lead. Dressed ordinary street or business clothes. Do not dress like a minister.

SILAS BLACK Character heavy, bout fift years old, dressed neat and played straight.

THADDEUS TOMPKINS ... Character comedy heavy, church Deacon chin piece

BUD JENKINS COMEDY Age in twenties, dresses flashy, and plays fast.

LOUISE VERNON Emotional Lead

JOSEPHINE JONES Soubrette but for the love of Mike don't play in short dresses as she is a marriageable age Mat's niece

MATILDA GRIMES Character, widow, must be played very sweet. Not old maidish, although she borders on that in the first act. Minister's housekeeper.

TIME...Any time. PLACE..... Any place. FIRST ACT.... Today.
SECOND ACT..... One week later. THIRD ACT..... One Month later.
FOURTH ACT..... One day later.

SCENE PLOT

ACT ONE. Exterior garden. Garden wall up stage, set house
X U gate in wall C tree C with bench around it, benches down R
and L home of Matt.

ACT TWO. Same as Act One

ACT THREE. Interior---home of Silas Black. Table and two chairs
C desk and chair down R sofa down L doors R and L door in flat L
C window in flat R C book case up C if possible have safe on
stage. With electric lights very nice effect have about six inches
around dial cut out fasten electric wires to two files, in darkness
as you supposedly burn through safe, touch files together.

ACT FOUR. Interior of Matilda's home. C D F table and two chairs
C fire place and rocker L sofa down R book case L U desk R U
hat rack in hall out from C D)

Stage director allowed to elaborate settings as suits the stage
available----but mostly to the pocket book of the manager. Leave
the play to an all wise providence.

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"THE INFIDEL"

BY

SGT. JOHN KAISER.

ACT ONE

(At rise Minister seated bench C reading Joe enters from house sneaks up behind, placing both hands over book minister looks up but not behind, not noticing who it is, smiles, pause) (puts both hands over hers) There is only one pair of hands like this in all the world.

Joe

I am beginning to believe you are human after all.

Min.

What makes you think that?

Joe

Oh---I don't know.

Min

(takes her hands, lifts her arms from around him and brings her to his side) Maybe if you were to look at me you could tell---

Joe

(eyes downcast) That's just the trouble.

Min

What?

Joe

Why---wh, when you look at me my heart gets to thumpin like a 1908 Ford goin' up a steep grade on high.

Min

(strokes her hair) Little girls sho ldn't be playing that game, Joe. Let's see what shall I say? Better throw on the brakes and travel on low.

Joe

(rises) Oh you make me sick.

Min

Why, Joe!

Joe

I mean it. You been here goin on three months now an evebofyd syas you are a human icicle.

Min

Everybody Joe?

Joe

(looks at him---in the eye) Oh well, I mean---the girls all say so.

Min

(smiles) Oh.

Joe

Parson, why don't you git married.

Min

Well, you see all the girs I'd have I can't get, and all those I could get, why the devil himself wouldn't have. (smiles playfully smiling broadly)

Joe

(angrily stamps foot) Oh! I think you're just the most meanest, the most

Min

(rises takes her hands, prevents her from going on) Here, here! I didn't mea that the way it sounded, not for you anyway. I wouldn't hurt your leelings for anything in the world. I think you are sweetest mos2 lovable little girl.

Joe

(jerks hands away) I'm not a little girl. Do you know how old I am I'm seventeen, going on eighteen, that's what I am.

Min

Why, you're almost a young lady.

Joe

Almost? (in scorn) Its about time you were waking up to the fact that I AM.

Min

You will always be a little girl to me Joe.

Joe

I don't want to be a little girl to anybody, much less to you. I'm grown up, I am and if you can't see it there are lots others who will.

Min

(surprised) Joe!

Joe

I mean every word of it. I am getting tired of being little-girl and made over as if I was a baby. I've got a heart and I've got feelin' Don't nobody seem to understand me a bit. You say I am prett and seet, and lovable, but that's all the good it does me. I t don't happen in the story books that way and I, and I---I just hate you---I just hate everybody (runs into house)

Min

(shakes head) Guess I'm not much of a ladies man. (exits R I

(Thaddues enters R 2 and Bud enters L U both make for house, both get to door at same time, both try to enter same time, back out and try again then back out and turn, look at each other in disgust, then try to enter again, back out glare at each other)

Thad

Well, of all the lunk headed fools---

Bud

Solid ivory every inch (starts to enter door as Thad does same, both back out)

That

(sputterin) Ye cantankerous ingnoramous. Air ye goin to let me enter that door? Air ye or air ye not?

Bud

I think the air will do us both good.

Thad

You haven't changed one bit, Bud Jenkins. You're jest a big a fool as ever.

Bd

My dear Thad--

Thad

Don't you Thad me. you young imp of satan. When you address me, youwill call me by my porper tilte---deacon.

Bud

(laughs) Deacon! Well may Angel Garbrial weep. (reels Thad's shoulder blades)

Thad

What air ye doin' that for?

Bud

I wanted to find out if you had any wings a sproutin.

Thad

(jerks away) Ye can't make fun of me, ye denatured young rapscaillon! Ye've been away to the city night on to fouryears and ye come back merrier than ever. As the good books ays; ye jest can't change the leopard's spots.

Bud

(strokes Thads beard imitates goat)

Thad

Thad
(almost speechless knocks hand away) Stop it! Stop it. I say. Ye can' make fun of me that way.

Bud
An old skate like you a deacon of the church---

Thad
Enough sir! When the church conferred upon me that honor---

Bud
The water ran up stream to get away from itself.

Thad
When the church conferred upon me that honor---

Bud
Don't please, I've got a cracked lip.

Thad
What' that got to do with it?

Bud
You might make me laugh.

Thad
(angry shakes fist in Bud's face) Ye allers could git on my nerves, ye no account city dude, if I wasn't a man of God, I'd---

Mat
(enter from house) Land sakes Deacon! ha e ye plumb gone on lost your senses?

Bud
Not yet, but soon.

Mat
Why, Bud Jenkins how are ye? (shakes hands) I'm plumb delighted to see you. When did ye git back home?

Bud
Got in last night. Gee, Mattie, you're prettier than a Missouri hollyhock

Mat
(laughs) You're the same flatterer Bud.

Thad
He allers was a lady killer.

Bud
(imitates goat)

Thad
(doubles fist)

Mat
Deaco, how dare you?

Bud
An in the presence of a lady.

Mat
Deacon, I think an explanation is due.

Bud
(aside) If he told it straight they'd send him to jail.

Thad
(stammering) Me and Bud has been havina little talk, Matilda, an some of the language he used riled me beyond the holdin in pint. I wasn't meanin' to cast any insinuations. If I said anything I take it back.

Mat
(smiles sweetly) I knew you would. You see Bud, Thaddens has jest been elected a Deacon in our church and he soetimes forgets himself.

Bud
(glares at Bud) Its a powerful job to hold on to yerself at all times, Matilda.

Bud
Yes, I know a feller over in Paris who choked to death eating horse meat.

Thad
How was that Bud?

Bud
He took a big mouthful an as he started to swallow some feller at the next table hollered whoa---

Thad
(long puase strokes beard puzzled Matilda laughs) I don't exactly see---

Bud
Of course not Deacon. You see this was a wild horse, and---(Joe enters from house and Bud stares at her) And, and the girl---

Thad
What's the girl go to tod with it?

Bud
Well, you see, the horse---(Joe turns up nose at him) turned up her nose at him, and---

Thad
Air ye plumb carzy air do ye take us fur a pair of--

Bud
I always stay on a pair.

Mat
Fo land sakes, Bud.

Bud
No, no I came over here to see the parson, and---(Joe smiles at him) she smiles at him, and and---

Thad
He's crazy as a bed bug.

Bud
And and---(stops and stares all turn and see Joe laugh and Bud wipes sweat aside) Aint she a peach?

Thad
Who, the horse?

Bud
No, you flat head! Mattie, interduce me quick.

Mat
Shaw, Bud you don't need no introduction to that girl.

Bud
Don't I? Great bottles of red ink! (wipes sweat)

Mat
Do you know who this is Joe.

Joe
Huh! Guess I do its old Bud Jenkins dressed up like a city dude.

Bud
(staggers X) right in solar plexus

Thad
(laughs)

Bud
(imitates goat, Thad quickly sobers up glares)

Mat
And do you mean to tell me, Bud Jenkins, you don't know who this is?

Bud
I don't number no queens among my acquaintances.

Thad
Ceptin rare nights at the club.

Bud
(starts to speak only groans)

Mat
Why, Bud, this is little Josie Jones, my sister Carrie's---

Bud
Well, of all the transformations, transfiguartions, transmigrations--- you don't tell me so? I am certainly delighted to see you Josie

(to Joe hand outstretch)

Joe

(both hands behind back cooly) Miss Jones if you please.

Thad

(laughs)

Bud

(turns quickly imitates goat, then back to Joe) Aw, see here Peaches---

Joe

Don't you peaches me, Bud Jenkins. I aint your peaches, apples, pears nor anything

Bud

I take it all back, honey bunch.

Joe

You must think I'm smemthing good to eat.

Bud

Youare, little one, why little girl, you're---

Joe

Stop it! Stop it, or I'll just scream, that's twice in the same place.

Bud

What?

Joe

That little girl stuff, I'm not a little girl, I'm a young lady. I'm seventeen years old, soon be bighteen and I'm not a little girl.

Bud

Not a quarrel on earth bunlde, eighteen is the age that suits me exactly.

Joe

Huh! A lot of good its goin to do you. I never did like you you always used to pull my hair, and-

Bud

I'm sorry.

Joe

An call me stub nosed, and---

Bud

But that was long ago.

Joe

And freckle faced, and---

Bud

Aw, have a heart little girl---

Joe

(beyond control stamps foot) Oh you you big you big you big hick.
(rusn af L U)

Thad

(laughs)

Bud

(puckers mouth imitates goat, stops looks afte Joe exits L U)

Whado Mat

I never saw Bud act so queer before.

Thad

Some women folks can have a right powerful queer effect upon some men, Matilda.

M t

Maybe so Deacon, but I never could undrstand how men co ld make such fools of themselves over women as they do sometimes.

Thad

Its according to the women Matilda.

Mat

Besides Joe is only a little girl.

Thad

Love aint no respector af age when the love bug bites Matilda.

(Joan enters R M and X and exit L U head held high as she reaches C Bud enters following after her neither look R or L) (Thad imitates goat as he gets L C) By the way, Matilda, did ye know that Louise Vernon has come home.

Mat

You don't say! When?

Thad

'Esterday mornin on the nine a M train.

Mat

I wond r what she was doin in the city all thist ime?

Thad

That's what we'd all like to know.

Mat

I've allers lowed as how it was dangerous fur young girls to go to the city alone.

Thad

Specially some girls I know of.

Mat

Do you think Deacon---

Thad

I aint thinkin at all. Silas Black was over to see her and so was Nathan Green but she won't tell 'em a thing as to why she went an what she did, I tell you Matilda, it all looks mighty suspicious to me.

Mat

I'll call up Sara Meechin on the phone, I'll bet she'll know all about it

Thad

Its already creatin a heap of talk

Mat

Do ye thi there be a scandal?

Thad

I aint sayin nothin, but I do know a certain travelin man that went to the city jest about the same time she did.

Mat

(gasps) "and sake! Ye don't say so?

Thad

I allers did think that ther girl wasn't jest what she let on to be.

Mat

Seein' as how the raisin she's had.

Thad

And nowne knows who her daddy or mammy was.

TEEP Mat

Well, that aint nothin again the girl, Deacon. I'm goin' to call Sara and find out what she knows. (starts to house)

Silas

(enter L U) Good afternoon Matilda. Howdy Deacon (both reply) I just came over to see the minister Is he home?

Mat

He's about the place somewhere. I think he's down in the orchard readin' a book.

Thad

I'll go git him fer ye Silas (exit R 1)

Silas

Thanks. what do you think of our new Deacon, Matilda?

Mat

Humph! I might answer like Joe an say he's all right only he needs fixin'. (both laugh)

Silas

Oh of course he isn't an angel, but he's a God fearing man and keeps a very level head.

Mat

Which aint sayin' overly much.

Silas

And what do you think of our new minister?

Mat

I think he's just perfectly grand.

Silas

Oh uh, but do you think he acts and talks the way a true minister should?

Mat

Just perfectly grand.

Silas

But the way he dresses, doesn't look like a minister at all.

Mat

Don't you go to worryin about the clothes. Jest you look and see what's inside them clothes. Ye never kin tell how far a frog can jump by the length of his ears.

Silas

Nevertheless, we the trustess of the church have been talking the matter over and we are going to come to some understanding.

Mat

Be careful Silas, Brother Morris undrstands very rapidly

Silas

Then there's another matter. This Louise Vernon is a member of our church, and from present indication her reputation is going to be dug into mighty deep.

Mat

Air all them stories true?

Silas

She won't talk, but whan a girl goes to the city alone to see the bright lights---

Mat

You don't say?

Thad

(enters R U) Brother Morris says he'll be here directly.

Mat

I'm goin' in the house and phone Sara right away (exits house)

Thad

Be ye tellin me about that Vernon gal?

Silas

Yes.

Thad

Most scandalous thing I ever heard tell of.

Silas

What with one of those new fangled mi isters, with dudish clothes, on our hands, we as Christian men have a heavy load to carry.

Thad

I am not in favor of these here up to date, preacherrs destroyin our old time beliefs, the religion that was good enough fur my father is good enough fer me.

Silas

Amen to that. Deacon, there must be a stop put to this somewhere why his last Sunday's sermon was almost sacriligious.

Thad

To me, Silas, he's almost an ifidel.

Silas

And we as Deacons and trustees of the church must uphold the honor and sacredness of our church.

Min

(enter R in time to hear last speech) Good afternoon, geneltmen. What has happened now that you are worried about the honor of our church?

Silas

You.

Min

I

Min

I don't quite understand.

Silas

We came here today to have a little talk with you. The entire congregation has been talking about you

Min

In what way?

Silas

Upon your lack of ministerial character----and appearance.

Thad

Ye don't dress like a parson at all

Silas

And you don't preach sound doctrine.

Min

Wait! Are you preferring charges?

Silas

No. We simply want to talk matters over with you and show you the way
A hint to the wise is often sufficient.

Min

Well, thats better; no charges, now, pbut perhaps later.

Silas

I am not saying so, but you and your board of trustees might as well understand each other now as any time,

Min

With all my heart, I'll speak as plain as you. I tolk the pastorate here because your church has no man made creed, and I could teach the bible as God had given me the light upon it, and not as some dried up old fossil saw it.

Thad

Fossils, dried up well I like that.

Silas

Careful, Deacon, don't lose your temper. What do you mean Parson?

Min

Just exactly what I say. You are objecting to the cl thes I wear. What do you want me to be, an undertaker's sign---dress all up in black and go around with a meek and sanctimonious air? I find nothing in my bible asking me to do that. I am a messenger of good cheer and goodness. I find good in anything and everything. I smile always, and the older I grow the younger I am.

Thad

And the further away from God ye git.

Min

Christ himself was such a messenger. Didn't he say, suffer little children to come unto me? and now could I ever expect little children to make up with me if I went around dressed like a funeral and with a scowl of worry upon my face?

Silas

But your sermons are not touching the right spot.

Thad

I aint heard ye preach hell-fire and bristone a single time.

Min

And what's more, you never will. I f I hague to bring people to the foot of the throne of God by threats of hell fire and brimstone, they will never get there. I believe in love. Once they come for pure love of God and they will never be a backslider. I want to reason with my people, to convince their minds just as Crhist did. Once let me win their minds and God has given me the power to sway their hearts.

Silas

Sounds very well, parson, but it goes against all the established rules of our church. We have a right to demand that the sermons you preach

shall coincide with our interpretation of the bible.

Thad

Hes, that's what we pay ye fur.

Min

You pay me for nothing of the kind, I teach the bible as I see it. I am the master of my own religious beliefs as God has given me the light, and all the gold on earth could never tempt me to do otherwise.

Silas

Then you don't think much of your salary here.

Min

Salary? What has money got to do with it I did not enter into this work for the money that was in it, and if the time ever comes when I am forced to choose between money and my honest convictions, I'll leave the church and stick to my bible.

Silas

Sir!

Thad

Hey! (both say it together)

Min

I mean it, every word, you come to me with th church salary as a sort of bribe and I am square and above board enough to say that if such is your idea of Christianity, I thinka God he made me the infidel you say I am.

Thad

I never heard such talk from a minister in all my life.

Min

Probably you are getting a little turht fer the first time.

Silas

Enough of this kind of talk. I shall see the rest of the trustees and deacons, and then---

Min

What?

Silas

You shall know all in good time. Good day sir (exit R U)

Thad

See, here, parson I think ye're doin' the worng thing.

Min

See here, deacon, I'll trouble you to mindyour own business.

Thad

How dare you address a deacon in such a manner?

Min

Because your narrow mindendess brought it upon you. I hate narrow mindeness and I don't mind saying you are narrow minded to a marked degree. Deacon, why don't you hold up the mirro to yourself and for once in your life try and live those christian principles you talk so much about.

Louise

(enter L U & to house) Good afternoon, Deacon.

Thad

Humphth! (thumbs in vest, disdainfully) Mr Black wants to see you.

Louise

Thanks. (equally cool) When he wants me ke knows where I live. (exit house)

Min

(has watched Louise's every move gives sigh when she exits)

Thad

Kinda catty, that gall allers did have a sharp tongue.

Min

It a pears to me deacon, that as the lady in question extended to you a friendly greeting, you as a gentleman should have returned the compliment.

Thad
Sometimes it pays to be kinda particular.

Min
Is this some more of your brand of christian religion?

Thad
No it haint, but when a gal goes a galvantin around the city, an all alone, and won't tell what she did, you can jest bet we're goin' to investigate.

Min
I know she will be glad to have you take such an interest in her affairs

Thad
Its the affair of th whole community. There's all talking about it. Its perfectly scandalous and she a member of our own church.

Min
Thanks. Then in hat case, I think I will take a hand.

Thad
Thems the first Christian words I've heerd ye utters since you've been here. I say do your duty and turn her out.

Min
(sarcastic) Whenever I want any good Christian advice I'll come to you, Deacon.

Thad
I don't believe ye mean a word of that parson, but jest the same, you as her pastor have got to do you duty and turn her out. (exit R U)

Min
(X down L dejectedly Joe enters L U followed by Bud Joe exits house, slamming dorr in his face, Bud turns with woe begone expression) What seems to be the trouble, Mr Jenkins?

Bud
(startled) Trouble? Oh yes yes (silly laugh) mPeaches.

Min
Peaches?

Bud
Honey bunch, little girl.

Min
You will have to speak English Mr Jenkins.

Bud
Love bug, love bug. (starts to exit L U talking to self) I'll git her if I have to stick around here all day (exit L U)

Min
Seems as if everything were in a muddle today.

Louise
(in house) Do you know where Mattie is Joe?

Joe
(in house) Guess she must have gone over to Mrs. Bornws. She'll be back in a minute, lets go out in the garden an wait. (both enter from house, talking) Do you know, Louise, we've got a new minister, and he's (sees Minister) Oh here he is now.

Min
How do you do Joe (never takes eyes off Louise)

Joe
I ve got a friend I want you to meet, Mr Morris. Miss Vernon this is Mr Morris our new minister, Mr Morris this is Miss Vernon.

Min
(X to her, takes hand) I am certainly delighted to know you, Miss Vernon

Louise
I am glad to know you.

Min
I saw you when you spoke to the deacon awhile ago, but he didn't introduce me.

Louise

The Deacon is sadly lacking in some respects.

Joe

(unnoticed) Mr Morris have you seen anything of (pulls his coat)
Mr Morris have you (aside) Yes, I think it'll be a nice day if it don't
rain, don't you? (as if to some one on her L Minister and Louise continue
pantomime talk Joe whistles) Here's where I vanish. (exit L U)

Min

I told the deacon about that, I didn't like it.

Louise

If you please. (notices Min still as her hand withdraws it)

Min

Oh yes certainly I beg your pardon

Louise

I wonder when Mattie will be back?

Min

She's liable to be back any minute, just ran over to anighbors
Better sit down and wait (points to bench R)

Louise

Thank you, I will. (sits R)

Min

I have been here about three months, do you know I think its strange
I have never met you before.

Louise

(hesitates) I left just before you came I guess.

Min

And the deacon informs me you are a member of my church.

Louise

Yes, I have always been a member.

Min

In that case then, I believe I have a right to say I have known
you for a long time.

Louise

About just how long? (smiles)

Min

Well---say---for three months I have been here.

Louise

That's a good beginning any way.

Min

It is for me.

Louise

And what should I say to that?

Min

Why, that you agree of course.

Louise

I believe I'll take it on probabtion.

Min

(both laugh) I have been waiting a long time to meet you

Louise

Why you have know n me three months (laughs)

Min

(rise and X to her) You and I are going to be friends, good friends,
aren't we?

Louise

You bet. (she rises and shakes hands)

Min

You may think me queer--

Louise

Not a bit, only frank

Min

And honest.

Louise
(eyes meet and hold) Yes, Mr. Morris, I believe that too.

Min
Don't call me Mr Morris, lets have it; that is just between ourselves that is when we are alone my name is Will, and when you get to know me real well, if you want to, why its plain Bill.

Louise
And just between ourselves, that is when we are alone, my name is Louise, and when you get to know me real well, if you want to, why its plain Lou.

Min
Lou.
Louise
(withdraws hands) If you please.

Min
Oh yes, I beg your pardon.
Louise
Don't; it takes two to hold hands you know. (laughs)

Min
And two to make a bargain
Louise
Say- My but you're a swift worker.

Min
Whenever I see anything I want I never let any grass grow under my feet.
Louise
'mock sigh) Don't. You take my breath away.

Min
(very close) And Lou, you have taken something more than breath away from me, something---

Mat
(has entered from house, clears throat both turn) I beg your pardon, William but---

Louise
(runs to Matilda arm outstretched) Oh mattie, Mattie. I'm awfully glad to see you.

Mat
(folds arms coolly) How do you do, Miss Vernon.
Louise
(stunned) Why, Mattie, what in the world's the matter?

Mat
I've jest had a phone call and I've been talkin with a few of the neighbors and I've learned a heap about you.

Louise
Mattie!

Mat
Things that no decent respectable woman would do.

Min
Mattie, I am ashamed of you

Mat
Better be ashamed of her, not me.

Louise
Stop! you have no right, you must not speak about me that way.

Mat
I aint, its all the folks in town and I'm goin to believe what they say unless you deny it. You spent the whole summer in the city and we want to know what you did there.

Min
Mattie, this is cruel it is unfair of you

Mat
Then let her speak up.

Louise

I might have expected this from others, but from you---why you've been the best friend I've ever had.

Mat

Then as that best friend I ask you to speak out and clear your good name

Louise

I can't, Mattie, I can't. Have faith and trust in me and you shall know all in good time. There has been nothing done save in honor. (in Mat's arms)

Mat

I aint condemn' you child its only for your own good. You've got to speak out.

Louise

I---I can't.

Mat

Then all I can say is God pity you. William, Mrs Brown wants you to come over and see her as soon as you can.

Min

Tell her I'll be over right away.

Mat

(Louise stands motionless, Mat starts for hours, returns puts arm around Louise) Think it over honey girl. What Mattie Grimes is tellin you is the gospel truth. (exits in house)

Louise

(X slowly bench R) This is what I am getting every where. 'sinks on bench) (stares into space a moment, lips quiver, then sobbing buries face in arms)

Min

(X to her) Don't little woman, don't---please (pause, her sobs stops) Do you remember the promise you made me awhile ago? You and I were going to be good friends.

Louise

(very low) Yes.

Min

You said it took two to hold hands.

Louise

And you said it took two to make a bargain

Min

Is it a bargain then?

Louise

Friends?

Min

(bending over her very low) Good friends.

Louise

(pause, looks up at him then down) (very low) Yes.

Min

(big sigh then looks around) Every bird in the universe is singing to split his throat, now lets begin by being perfectly frank. I want to know something about yourself. You see I've only known you for---for three months.

Louise

(both smile) There's not much to tell---I---I don't know very much myself---that's the trouble. You see I'm only a wif, a nobody Twenty four years ago I was found on the door step of daddy Vernon's home---wrapped up all warm and nice in a big market basket. Daddy Vernon took me in (all this spoken very low, slow and intense.) He adopted me, gave me a home and education. He's the only real mother I ever had.

Min

(pats her on shoulder) Poor little girl.

Louise

When I was a little girl I never had any cause to worry about my birth I thought Daddy Vernon was really my daddy, he was so good to me. But when I grew older, and the young folks would have little parties and dances, then I found out Silas Black's son snubbed me the first party I ever attended, it almost broke my heart. I was only a wiaf a nobody who didn't know who her father or mo her was, many and many a night during the long winters, instead of attending the parties or dances I have gone to my room and cried---(pause lips quiver fighting to keep back tears) not at the loneliness but the cruelty the unfairness ~~which is the cause of it all~~ of it all. I was forced to suffer for something I had not done, for which I was not to blame and then daddy ---dear old daddy Vernon would sneak in and put his arms around me and comofrt me, just ---like amother In those moments together we fought it all out, so etimes I think that woman's hearts were made to break, that God made them that way.

Min

Shhh! Don't say that. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give thee rest" Now woe knows but what God has sent me to you to give you the help, to be the friend you so much need. To---to mend that broken heart.

Louise

(looks up then down) But I was strong, I conqured. I had many temptation but I laughed them away. I lived honorable I live straight, No girl could have been more highly respec ed than I have been, and then Daddy Vernon died and I was left all alone, all alone in that big house---and no mother. The weeks seems months and the months seemed years. And lonliness brought thoughts, thoughts of what might have been. I was a wiaf a nobody, when this summer came I---I---

Min

You packed up and went to the city

Louise

(looks up startled) No, I went because----because---

Min

(pause), And the time is not at hand that you want to tell. Little woman You don't need to tell ---never, until you wish of your own free will You cou'dn't do wrong if you wanted to, and if an angel from heaven were to say you had I 'd believe a mistake had been made in St Peter's books. (Don't read for hand---must not be)

Louise

(rises) Mr. Morris.

Min

(pushes her back) Bill---quick!

Louise

Bill---

Min

(she rises hands clasped) We are friends, till death do us part. Is it a bargain.

Louise

It takes two to hold hands, you know.

Bud

(Joe enters L U followed by Bud, marches hurriedly into house, s slamming door Bud comes down) Well, I'll be d---Love bugs! (exits L U long strides whistling loud) (Or he can stand C and say---that disease must be catching) (I prefer the former it is much stronger.) (I like to see the director do a little figuring)

"THE INFIDEL"

BY

JOHN KIASER.

ACT TWO

(The same set stands. At rise Joe enters L U followed by Bud both look tired and all worn out exit R U he is still following her)

Mat

(tner from house with pan of potatoes. Looks after them sighs shakes head) Poor Bud, that love Bug hit him deep (X down sits bench C peeling potatoes, old fashi oned wash bench that will tip up when sat upon either end, sighs looks off R)

Thad

(enters L U X down C) Mornin' Matilda.

Mat

Mornin' Deacon.

Thad

How be ye feelin' this mornin' Matilda?

Mat

Terrible, Deacon terrible.

Thad

You do be lookin' pretty pert, pears to me ye grow better lookin' every day.

Thad Mat

Now, deacon, you behave.

Thad

Gosh ding't/ (tkicks one foot against the other)

Mat

(sighs) Oh you men, you men

Thad

Do ye mind if I occupy the throne with ye, Matilda?

Mat

You may be seated Deacon.

-had

'sits big sigh of contentment, both sit at opposite ends, pause)
I been doin' a heap of thinkin' here lately, Matilda.

Mat

Have you?

Thad

Yep, ye see I've sold my farm down in Coon Holler---

Mat

You don't say?

Thad

And I've got a right smart sum laid by in the bank

Mat

Gittin' ready fer a rainy day, Deacon?

Thad

An I've got my home here in town, an---

Mat

Yes?

Thad

an I'm all lone. (looks at Mat and sighs)

Mat

Why don't you git a wife?

Thad

(moves closer) Matilda, have ye ever thought of gittin' married again?

Mat

No, I low as how I aint never thought much about it.

Thad

(looks at her, moves back) It haint good to wait too long, and women as old as you--

Mat

Old! How dare you say I'm old?(rises, bench tips, deacon falls)

Thad

I didn't mean you was old Matilda.

Mat

You said it.

Thad

(rises) I know I said it, but I didn't say it (both start to sit at same time, Deacon careful that she sits with him)

Mat

(starts to sit, rises, Deacon rises with her) You said it and you didn't say, Thaddues Tompkins---

Thad

But I didn't mean it the way it sounded. (wipes sweat) I mean as seein as how we was both getin along in---well, that we aing spring chickens Matilda. (both starting to sit)

Mat

That's better. (both sit)

Thad

Once in awhile when I get to talkin with you my tongue gets sorta twisted. There aint nothin on this here globe that I'd like better than to have---(Mat drops potatoe rises to pick it up Thad almost falls again, but gets to feet) Gol darn't! It just can't be did. (X to bench L)

Mat

(sits C) What was you saying, Deacon?

Thad

(sits L as she sits C) That I feel saffer over here.

Mat

What!

THAD

I said that I felt safer now that I had sold my farm and had the money in the bank.

Mat

Humph! I've got a little in the bank myself, Deacon.

Thad

That reminds me, I saw that Vernon gal as I was comin' out an she smiled right sweet at me.

Mat

Well, there wasn't antyhing wrong in that, was there? She's knowed you all her life.

Thad

That may be, but she's got the most peculiar way of smilin'---

Mat

Don't be silly deacon

Louise

(enter L U starts for house, overhears)

Thad

Its gospel truth, Matilda, don't nobody know who or what she is, and ye can't tell what kind of blood she has in her.

Mat

Pears to me you've known her long enough to find out.

Thad

Ye never can tell about a woman, Here she lives in our town all her life. I guess respectable, and then she ups and goes to the city.

Mat

Is that a crime, Deacon?

Thad

But hat did she go fur, an why did she stay so long? (X to Mat confidential) Silas Black says as how she drew nigh on to \$500 out of his bank. Now what did she dow with that?

Mat

Pears to me Deacon your takin a right powerful interest in Louise's affiars here lately.

Louise

(stands just behind them) Yes---far more r ght than I have ever given him

Mat

(rise, Thad takes L) Oh! Why Louise, how you frightened me.

Louise

(never takes eyes off Thad) I didn't mean to Matilda, and I didn't mean to stop and listen, but I couldn't help it.

Thad

Well, they do say, that them as listens where they haint supposed to listen, seldome hear good of themselves.

Louise

Not when the source is considered.

Thad

How dare you?

Mat

Ye deserve it, deacon, and more too

had

Oh, well---

Louise

You were talking about me to Mattie, all you said was true---

Thad

Ha ha! Didn't I tell you Matilda?

Louise

All but one thing (pause Mat pats her on back) You said I had lived in t is town all my life, you GUESSED respectable. Don't you know that I have lived respectable.

Thad

(fidgets one foot to other) Oh well---

Louise

Nave you ever seen me do anything that wasn't respectable.

Thad

No no, but there's a heap of stories goin round about you

Louise

And who is father to most of them?

Thad

Why, how should I know?

Louise

I don't know but I must ask you tdeacon to never, never repeat them again ---unless you know them to be true. I have a right to ask that. (sweet and low)

Mat

You have, honey girl, nd from now on no one is goin to talk about you in my presence.

Thad

Air ye goin' to uphold her in what she's done?

Mat

What's she done? Here's the girl now. Tell it to her face what she's done.

Thad

I will when the proper time coes, there's to be a meetin of the church board this morning an after that I'll have a whole lot to say.

Mat

Thaddeus Tompkins if you dare---

Thad

I aint a doin nothin, but as a member of the board I'm goin' to dmy duty.

Mat

Well, if houndan' a defeseless girl is your duty then all I got to say is I aint got much use fur you nor your churbh board neither.

Louise

Deacon, don't a lifelong friendship count for anything?

Thad

Not in a case of this kind, especailly when you refuse to explain things Wait until after the board meetin' and then I'll give ye my say. (exit L U)

Louise

(Mat pats her shoulder she buries her face in her breast) Mattie, Mattie.

Mat

There, there, honeygirl, don't e go to payin' no attention to what that old hypocrite says.

Louise

I---I can't help it. Even those I considered my best friends are actin ghe same way

Mat

Just smile as you always have all will come out right in the end.

Louise

When I first came home, you- --you, Matilda, why do you defend me now?

Mat

I was anold fool then, thats way

Lo ise

But why now?

Mat

(puase) Mr. Morris stands up for you

Louise

Oh (X down R)

Mat

Ad what he says is right.

Louise

Oh (sits)

Mat

You can always depend on Mr Morris, honey girl, an if he's your friend you jest stick to him

Louise

That's just the trouble, I have no right.

Mat

If you haven't the right, you mat make the right. ou've still got friends, and friends that stick.

Louise

You don't know how much that means to me. I need friends, but the way seems dark----(rises) Mattie I'm going away.

Mat

You mustn't.

Louise

It's the only way.

Mat

Tongues will wag fiercer than ever.

Louise

No worse than now. No, I have quite made up my mind.

Min

(enter from house)

Mat

Mat
But what will Mr. Morris say?

Lou se
I---I don't---(turns sees Min)

Min
Yes, have you thought of him?

Mat
Oh Parson, you're jest in time. She's goin to leave and I can't persuade her to stay

Min
Perhaps between the two of us we can persuade her.

Mat
No, you can do better alone. I'd only be in the way (armaround Louise)
Listen to what the parson has to say Honey girl and let him advise you. Landsakes! I'll bet my dough's raised all over the kitchen floor. (runs into house)

Min
Now wht's all this I hear about you're going away?

Lou se
I've got to, Mr. Morris, I've got to.

Min
I'll forgive you for calling me Mr Morris, but never if you run away just when you're needed most.

Lou se
You don't understand, you can't. Every way I turn its snubs and insults, cold looks and cutting remarks.

Min
You must be strong.

Louise
But even the strong can break after a time it is like the constant drip drip drip of water it will wear away a stone. I have fought so hard. I have laughed when my heart was almost breaking. I would have broken long before this, if it had been for you. And now you have placed Mattie on my side. Two friends I prize above any in the world. All your friendship has meant to me you will never know. I have fought until I can fight no longer, for all our sakes I must go away.

Min
Louise did you ever read of a ship out on the great ocean going down to a watery grave? Do you know who is the last to leave, to desert that sinking ship? The Capt, the master. As long as the ship is there, he ~~stays~~ sticks, and quite frequently he goes down with her. You are the Capt, the master of your own destiny, Your ship may be floundering but your crew is still on board and you cannot desert, you cannot leave and be true to your friends or be true to yourself.

Louise
Don't put it up to me like that---will

Min
I must, if I am going to be fair to all concerned. You have told me the story of your life. I know there is something you wished to keep a secret. That is your right, but you must be strong enough to pay the cost.

Louise
If I only dared to tell, I have done nothing wrong, I went to the city for a purpose, a purpose dearer to me than life itself. All my life I have hungered, I have prayed for some one thing to come true. I have worked I have struggled I have fought, and then one day a ray of light came. It was as if the doors of heaven had opened to me. I followed that light and it led me to the city. It grew

brighter day by day, but it was like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow---always evading, never ending. I clung to my ray of light and at last hope almost dying was given a new lease on life. The pot of gold was just ahead, only one thing needed to teach out and clutch it---secrececy. My lips were sealed, one word and all would be lost. That, that is why I cannot speak out and tell them what I---

Min

Little woman, I think I understand. Yes, far more than you think I do. Perhaps, for all you know, I am working in the same direction

Louise

Oh no, you couldn't.

Min

No? Are you going to stay?

Louise

I think it best that I go away. It'll only be for a short time, and then I'll---

Min

You'll do nothing of the kind. I won't let you go.

Louise

You won't let me?

Min

No MY love will hold you

Louise

Your, your love?

Min

Yes.

Louise

Surely you are jesting.

Min

Never more serious in my life. I have never loved before. You are the first and only woman. I too have had a hunger in my heart. I to have preyed that some day that hunger might be appeased. If you had had a rainbow before you, so have I. It has been before me always---the pot of gold just out of my reach. They tell me I am cold and distant. Then you came, came into my life like a golden ray of sunshine that creeps into a darkened cavern for the first time. You dispelled the darkness and made of life a throbbing, supendous reality.

Louise

(unstrung during love scene, almost breaking turns away burying face in arms) Don't, don't!

Min

(close) I love you Lou, I love you, I love you. (arm around her) It doesn't take years of time to form love. Love is born of the moment. With such a love as I have, I could live a life time in a single hour. With you in my arms I could smile in the face of death.

Little woman I love you, I love I love you.

(s slowly turning head away almost fiercely he turns her back) Look at me, (pause) I love you, I love you, I love you. (lips closer, almost touch, she breaks away X him L hiding face in arms)

Louise

Don't, don't, you must not.

Min

Why?

Louise

Because you cannot love me as you say

Min

I cannot? (takes step as if to take her in his arms) I do.

Louise

(evades him) Don't you must not.

Min

Again I ask why?

Louise

You have only known me a few days.

Min

That is no reason.

Louise

I----I am unworthy of our love.

Min

As to that, only one person on earth has a right to do the judging---
the man who loves.

Louise

Now when love has made him blind. I am thinking of the future. I
am not worthy to be the wife of any man. I am a waif, a nobody a poor
lost soul who doesn't even know the blood that flows her veins.

Min

My love is strong enough to bridge even than chasm. My love sees
you only sweet pure and noble.

Louise

(goes to him, places hand on each shoulder) Mr. Morris, I have
never had a love affair in all my life. I have looked forward to that,
yes. I knew the time would come when I would meet a man I could love.
I could never love but once, that is how strong my love would be. That
love would be my life---to have and to hold that love. I could not live
without it. I would not want to live without it. I knew it would
come to me sooner or later, so I reasoned with myself, knowing myself as
I do I knew I could not afford to take chances. Love is too sacred for
that. Blood is always bound to tell. I know not mine, neither father
nor mother. No matter how or when or where, that knowledge would
always be before me. No mortal is strong enough to get away from
his own life, my husband would know it, other people would know it.
It would always be like a sword above our heads, and some day it might be
the cause of cooling that love especially---children. I could not
afford to take that chance. Do you understand? (very low)

Min

(low) Yes.

Louise

You tried to kiss me just now and almost---(pause closes eyes)
Only one man's lips will ever touch mine, my husband.

Min

I wanted the right to protect you, to shield you from every harm and
care.

Louise

My way is best. I couldn't, No I couldn't matter how hard I tried ever
take a chance of losing that love (X to house Min X sits bench L
elbows on knees, face in hands. Louise turns X to him hand on shoulder)
Willl-----Bill. (he slowly turns--she smiles) I have made a decision.
(pause he looks at her) The master is going to stick to the ship.
(quick runs into house) I'm going to tell Mattie all about it.

Min

The master is going to stick to the ship (sigh of contentment exits L
L humming)

Bud

(Joe enters R followed by Bud, both tired and worn out, Joe sinks on
bench L and Bud R wipes faces, sinks back dejectedly) The end of
a perfect week.

Joe

You look weak.

Bud

You don't look like a late model.

Joe

I can still get around on low.

Bud
What do you think I am, a race horse?

Joe
(looks him over contemptuously) Naw, who ever heard of a donkey being a race horse?

Bud
And little Willis came under the wire at last.

Joe
(brays)

Bud
(X to C) Aw, be nice to me, Peaches.

Joe
What did I tell you about that? I am not a fruitstand.

Bud
Hon

Joe
And I am not a bee.

Bud
No, but you can sting, donkey (brays, fitting it on to word donkey)

Joe
Little boys should be seen and not heard.

Bud
Bud Little boy? And if I call you lit--

Joe
(rises quickly) Don't you do it.

Bud
(pantomimes with mouth)

Joe
That's better.

Bud
But hang it all, I've got to tell you something.

Joe
I don't see why?

Bud
Well, how can I?

Joe
Nobyd's askin you to.

Bud
That's just the trouble.

Joe
What?

Bud
Oh (thumps in vest) you don't understand men well enough for that.

Joe
Do you ever have any trouble in getting hats to fit you (sweetly)

Bud
Why yes at times---no no no, Oh yow!

Joe
Pears to me you'd make good at a job in a feather foundry.

Bud
How's that?

Joe
A heavy weight for a light weight job, I'll bet you could tickle the feathers (laughs)

Bud
I did have a good job in the navy

Joe
What was that?

Bud
I was a pilot in a soap factory.

Joe
Pilot in a soap factory? How could you a pilot in a soap factory?

Bud
The fellow at the machine next to me would make the soap and I'd pile it.

Joe
(groans) I had a job while you was gone.

Bud
What was it?

Joe
I was dairy maid in a candy kitchen

Bud
A dairy maid in a candy kitchen. And pray may I ask what your duties were?

Joe
I'd milk chocolates.

Bud
(sinks weakly on bench, pantomimes poker game) what have you got?
A pair. I've got a full house---you take the pot You win.

Joe
Do you know, Bud.

Bud
(dejectedly) Naw, I don' know nothin

Joe
I'm beginnin' to like you

Bud
Hugh (trns quickly she drops eyes)

Joe
I've changed my opinion about you a whole lot (Bud swells up thumbs in vest) You're near as big a hick as I thought you were.

Bud
(unswells) I wonder what you'd do if you really had it in for a fellow.

Noe
I'd love him to death

Bud
ugh (starts for her)

Joe
(sweetly) But I haven't got in for you, Bud.

Bud
If the whole ocean was full of fish and I'd fall in it, I'd come up with a whole pocket full of mussel shells.

Joe
Well, when you are around a lady you shouldn't hate yourself so much

Bud
I wonder if I'm coming or going.

Joe
Travel sideways and lessen the speed.

Bud
When I'm around you I'm travelling just about an even 140 miles an hour.

Joe
Some speed. What do you travel in a Ford (can use local railroad, but such is bad form in any play, no matter how bad the play)

Bud
(takes her hand, both down C very mysterious) We were alone in the darkness. there in covers below,
Last night you came to me a creeping, my heart was all in a glow
But you didn't play fair I tell you, I s--raateek-- scratched but the sting was there

Thou, bed bug you bit, you bit me right where the skin was bare

(Joe works this up sing if possible at least last half line)

J e

Shh (finger to lips---this poetry can be cut if desired)
 Last night I was sweetly a snoozin--last night I heard, I felt you so
 My heart was sore for you were near I held my breath and said oh da--
 And the bed bugs large and small, daddies and mammies ye gods of old
 My sleepis oe're to bed no more, last night was the end of the world.

Bud

Some class some class I say. You're somecandy kind ---allwool and
 a yard wide. Say Joesie---

Joe

(claps hands) Encowe monsier, encore, at last its learned my name.

Bud

Huh, I knew your name all the time.

Joe

Well, you floundered around a good deal before you acknowledged the
 crime. You called me about everything else in the c lendar.

Bud

Are you going to try and make me stick to that name?

Joe

That'swh t my mother named me.

Bud

But I know a whole lot of teehrs that suit you more---

Joe

Now don't get mushy, and I do hate'm when they slop over.

Bud

St. Peter's Golden door knob! are you goin to wear the pants already?

Joe

If I do they won't be hand me downs.

Bud

Lets compromise.

Joe

What on, the---

Bud

Naw, the name--

Joe

How?

Bud

How many letters has my name got?

Joe

Three.

Bud

Then if I called you Joe you'd have three too---50/50 what do you say?

Joe

It's a go.

Bud

Gimme your hand on it. (takes her hand) For---

Joe

Sidetrack it Bud, none of that for better or worse stuff for mine.

Bud

Anything you say goes little girl.

Joe

Little girl! I just knew it couldn't last. You, you, oh you're just
 a hick after all n(runs off L U)

Bud

(stands looking after her) A ck. Now-ain woman just simply hell?
 I never could open my mouth without putting my foot in it. A hic.
 A sod buster. Great gobs of mud, I'll win her yet. (starts off L U
 see Silas, and Thad) He lo, her comes Silas Black and Thad Thomas
 I wonder what they're up to? So e sculdeggery or I'm not knee high to
 a grasshopper. I wonder if I'm on the right track. I've got a hunch

but I aint just sure, I lack one certain thing and I'm going to have that if I have to break into a certain gentleman's house. Back to the Sherlock for me Here's where I git an ear full (hides behind house)

Silas

(enter L 2 with Thad) You did right in coming to me. Besides we need you for the board meeting.

Thad

That's what I told 'm---that I'd have my little say jest as soon as I saw you.

Mat

(enter from house) Good morning Silas Deacon(nods to Thad)

Silas

Good morning Mattie, just dropped in to have a little talk with you.

Thad

We have a matter of the gravest importance to---

Si

We are here in the interest of our church

Thad

The morals of the younger and risin generation are fallin low in the barometer of true Christian livin.

Silas

We are here to ask your opinion concerning a very vital question.

We are earnestly concerned over the manners and actions of our Minister

Mat

If its Bro. Morris he came to talk about---

Silas

Not alone. The most vital question to be considered is the case of young sister Louise Vernon

Thad

A question that is the talk of the whole community.

Mat

And I say, to the everlasting shame of that community.

Thad

Matilda, you talk almost sacrilegious. Oh oh.

Mat

You make me sick the two of you.

Silas

Then we cannot count on you

Mat

Count on me? What for? The ones vitally concerned are Bro Morris and Miss Vern n. Tell it to them, tell it to their faces and not behind their backs.

Silas

We are here for that very purpose.

Mat

(calls into house) Louise, oh Lou

Louise

(in house) Hello, what is it.

Mat

There's a party out here wants to see you

Louise

(in house) In just a minute. I'm helping with the dishes.

Mat

All right (to men) She'll be out shortly. I'll go an git Bro. Morris and you kin have all the fun you want (exit L)

Thad

That's one more agin us Silas.

Silas

Never fear. The board is behind us and that is all we need.

Thad

This new fangled minister of our must be made to see the error or

of his ways an this ----(sees Louise in door) an this----

Louise

(pause comes down C smiles sweetly) Good morning, Mr. Black (nods to Thad) Have I interrupted a private conversation?

Silas

No, not exactly for our talk did and will concern you. That's why we asked Mattie to call you.

Louise

Very considerate of you I'm sure.

Silas

I am always considerate of people's feelings, but in the matter we may before you today I may appear exceedingly harsh. I want you to believe me when I say I am not doing it from mere choice.

Louise

I have always looked upon you as more than a friend Mr. Black. You know since daddy Vernon died you have attended to all my business affairs.

Thad

No t all, its that particular we want to know about.

Louise

I, I don't quite understand.

Silas

The tongue of scandal has been very busy for some time now, and that has finally come home to our church That is why we were talking it in hand.

Louise

And, I am the one who has---

Thad

You are the one the whole town is talking about.

Silas

To put it blun ly many a scandalous story is being told about you. Stories which if true would bar you from the society of our young people and would force us to---(pause)

Thad

Ye might jest as well say it Bro. Black---take away her member ship in our church.

Silas

We are heress spokesmen for the board of trustees of our church. For some time past demoralizing influences have been at work and if allowed to continue, the very foundations of our church will totter and fall.

Min

As your pastor I must say this is the firts time I have been made aware of such.

Silas

It is because of your blindness that the board has taken action.

Min

In waht way?

Silas

We are issuing an ultimatum. You as pastor of should be above the critixm you are causing. We want our minister to dress as a minister and we want---

Thad

Some good old fashioned hell fire and Brimstone.

Joe

You'll get that soon enough Deacon.

Thad

I'll give it to him now if you say so Joe.

Thad

Young man, I'll have you chruched for that.

Min

Gentlemen, if you have come here to---

Silas

Allo me to finish. We are willing to overlook those shortcomings just mentioned. We believe your better judgement will finally prevail but when it comes to this young woman---(points to Louise. Cause--- no kidding from no on work to a climax go to it fast)

Min

(after short pause X to her) Well, what about this young lady?

Silas

Are you going to take your stand at her side?

Min

That's exactly where you are going to find me.

Louise

Mr. Black state your charges this supsense is killing me.

Silas

We the board of trustees want to know why you have went to the city this summer, what you did there and why you stayed as long as you did.

Louise

I refuse to tell you.

Min

Is it a crime for a young lady to go to the city

Mat

Land sakes, Silas, she aint a baby

Silas

It is not going to the city alone, but the peculiar circumstances that have arisen from her going.

Min

In waht way?

Silas

In the first place we know she has no relations she might have visited. She did not go to secure work for she has a tidy sum in the bank besides on in her own home. During the summer she drew out of the bank almost \$500 she spent the entire amount in the city. We want to know how and why?

Min

I still see no reason.

Silas

A certain travelling man who makes our town, and known to be a lady killer. Mr. Wilton you know him?

Louise

Ijmet him in your stree, that is all.

Silas

He went to the city the same time you did. He quit his company--- whereabouts unknown. For the psast week I have had detectives in the city at work. They have searched every hotel register, every boardning house and no trace of Miss Vernon can be found. I am not giving you idle gossip---I am giving you facts.

Mat

Speak honey girl and tell him it is a lie.

Louise

I----I cannot. I want you tall to hear me. It is not rom choice I refuse to speak out and refute these chrages. Can't you see my heart is breaking from the silence that is forced upon me? I cannot understand why Mr. Black and Mr Tompkins hound me as they do. Perhaps - - I deserve it, but not in the way they think. The one ambition the one dream of my whole life is about to be realized. I only ask you to have faith to trust me and whether I have won or lost I will tell you all.

Silas

This matter has reached such a stage it is beyond the mere talking of the word of a woman who knows neither her father nor mother--- a foundling; a waif, a nobody. A woman who knows not even herself the blood that flows in her veins. It may be good, but the chances are it is bad. (Min attempts to speak) Don't interrupt. This sounds brutal. It can't be otherwise. Those are the circumstances I spoke of that force the issue. The girl must speak out or---

Min

What?

Silas

She will be thrown out of the church and forever be an outcast.

Min

And your board would condemn a person on mere hearsay, idle gossip of lying tongues.

Silas

You forget sir, that I have had detectives on this case and the girl herself refuses either to affirm or to deny.

Min

That counts for nothing. This is the first time I knew it was the business of the church to hire detectives to ferret out the vices of its members. I thought the church was to protect and shield as much as possible. I thought the church was to build up, not to tear down. You are forcing me to believe that our christian religion is nothing but canting hypocrisy.

Silas

It is not the religion Bro. Matiss but the misuses we make of that religion.

Min

These charges contain not one speck of true religion. It smacks of the persecution pure and simple. Big strong men with the power of a hoard of trustees behind them and poor helpless girl--- And now I want to ask you one question. Why do you take such a personal interest in this matter? It is almost akin to hatred. Why I ask you? and I demand an answer.

Thad

Well you see--

Min

I am not speaking to you? Mr. Black is the head and brains of this affair. You answer my question Mr Black.

Silas

I---I refuse to answer.

Min

Then I reply as you did to this young lady your silence condemns you.

Silas

I am not here to be cross examined.

Min

Ever since I have made the acquaintance of Miss Vernon I have been wondering why your great interest. What if Miss Vernon did go to the city and spend the summer. What if she did spend some of her own money? That is no crime and even if some slight folly of indiscretion was committed, where lives the mortal who does not live in a glass house.

Silas

Good christian people have nothing to conceal.

Min

We are all equally guilty. Even you.

Silas

Sir!

Min

I made a statement of a fact, and I will stake my reputation.

Do you deny that you have ever in your life committed an act of folly or indiscretion you wish kept a secret?

Silas

(almost screams) I do I do. You can't bulldoze me.

Min

Do you dare me to probe into your life and find out?

Silas

Nor can you frighten me with silly threats.

Min

I dare you----man to man---to give me that liberty.

Silas

I accept the dare---but if at the end of the thirty days granted by the board you fail to make your fact a reality, I shall brand you as a falsifier, you shall resign your church, and this woman shall be turned into the streets where she belongs.

Min

I accept the challenge. Mattie pack my trunk (starts for house)

Mat

Where are you going?

Min

I'm going to the city. And I'm not coming back until---I HAVE NAILED THESE LIES.

CURTAIN

(Lamp on table C low Silas enters rise, turns up lamp X desk fumbles in pigeon hole, finds document opens starts to read Thad knocks. D flat Silas quickly puts paper in pocket. Thad knock second time. Silas open door flat Thad enters) Come in Thaddeus.

Thad

Kinda blustery. Wouldn't be surprised if it blew up quite a storm.

Silas

Have a cigar? (offers cigar has two sits desk)

Thad

I'll go ye if I lose (Silas lights Thad's cigar. Thad smokes in an awkward manner, sits R of table C)

Silas

Nothing beats a good cigar, especailly when its blustery outside.

Thad

I rather like 'em myself, but you see I aint supposed to smoke 'em, and if I was to git ~~one~~ ~~Thad~~ caught--- (looks at cigar) Pretty good cigars you have Silas.

Silas

Just two for a quarter, Thad.

Thad

Gosh almighty! you don't say?

Silas

It was mighty fine of you to come over and spend the night with me.

Thad

I'm allers willin to oblige a good neighbor.

Silas

Do ye know what night this is?

Thad

he one before the last of that thirty day altatun (mispronounced) you have the parson.

Silas

Yes, and I've got 'em just where I want them

Thad

Knocking off cigar ashes, holds cigar looking at it & I aint got much use for them that breaks the laws of the church.

Silas

Did you get word to Miss Vernon that I wanted to see here here at the o'clock tonight?

Thad

(nods head yes)

Silas

Anyone see you?

Thad

Nope. I come up through the back pasture. They was jest a gittin supper

Silas

What did you tell her?

Thad

That you had some very important developments of the case to talk over with her. She said she'd be here.

Silas

(pause, blows smoke) Women were born to be fools. Anytting new happened?

Thad

Nothing

Silas

Any news of the parson?

Thad

Not a scratch since he left for the city

Silas

Silas
Just one more day. Nothing to fear from him.

Thad
(making gesture with cigar, Mat knocks flat Thad sits paralyzed
poised in air, pause)

Silas
That can't be Miss Vernon

Thad
I aint gonna take no chances (thros cigar behind desk sneaks off R)

Silas
(calls) Come in (Matilda enters flat wind howls blows in door Silas
rises) Why Matilda, this is a surprise. Won't you sit down?
(points to chair ^{3A} of table C)

Mat
Thanks.

Silas
Might I ask as to why I am indebted for the visit at this hour of the
night.

Mat
That little girl jest left my house. She was in a terrible nervous
state. When I told her there was no word from Mr. Morris she cried.
She cries most of the time. Her heart is jest a breakin, that's wht
it is.

Silas
Has that little girl been telling you somet ing when she came to see
you after supper?

Mat
No, why do you ask?

Silas
I didn't know but wht some sort of a scehem was being concocked.

Mat
No scheme, only myself---a life long meber of your church comes and
akes you, as a forgiven Christian man, to withdraw those charges an
allow---

Silas
"hen ever a woman acts as she does there is always a man at the bottom
of it.

Mat
For shame Silas. I thought you a better man than that.

Silas
My manhood is not to be questioned.

Mat
It is by me, for any man who would do as you are doing is not a man.

Thad
Matilda you--

Mat
An you ever was one.

Silas
I am going to do my duty and if tomorrow this Vernon girl fails to
clear herself of the charges against her, she will be thwon out of the
church and your worthy minister can hunt himself a new pulpit.

Mat
I've still got that hundred acres of bottom land you have been a'
wantin to buy these many years. Drop these charges, an tomorrow
I'll place the deed in your hands.

Silas
You would try to bribe me?

Mat
If it was to save those I love, I'd try to bribe an angel.

Silas
Matilda there is no power on earth that can cuse me to change

Bud
Second and last, but not least, Miss Vernon
Silas

Yes.

Bud
Say, can't you say anything else but yes.
Silas

Yes.

Bud
Yes.
Silas
(angry) Yes.

Bud
Are you kidding me?

Silas
Do I look like a man who would condescend to bandy words with a mere boy. If you have come here to harp again upon that subject of churuching Miss Vernon--- you may as well go

Bud
I'm not anxious about stayin. I don't like your company any more than you do mine (X to him serious) See here, I want to know what you are going to do about these here church charges.

Silas
Just exactly what the board of trustees demand.

Bud
That means Miss Vernon gets kicked out and the parson gets to hunt another birth.

Silas
If the charges are not cleared up by tomorrow night.

Bud
Mr Black do you know what I think? If you pull a trick like that on the flimsy evidence you have---you are not fit to eat stale liver with Ben Peter's flea bitten hound dogs.

Silas
(rises) You imp of satan out of my house and never darken its door again. Out I say or I'll forget my self and (holding self in)

Bud
And what? (pause) Don't ever try any monkey doodle business with me. Silas, there might be back action, I come to you, a man in trouble, and you give me the horse laugh. I have given my word I'd clear Louise of these charges or get you to withdraw them and now you, you are goin' to make me out a liar.

Silas
That is not my fault.

Bud
But it is. That's what I'm tryin to git thorough your head. You won't seem to understand. You're the main squeeze, the head ring master, you're the whole works. Come clean Si and tell little Buddy the whole truth.

Silas
There's the door (to flat) Go!

Bud
I'll give you one more chance. Are you goin to do the square thing in this?

Silas
For the last time I show you the door.

Bud
All right ---I'll go (said mournfully as he goes out, but quickly turns before Silas can speak and speaks full of life) But I'll come back

Silas

(slams door in face locks door, wipes sweat, totters land sits at desk) I trust to the Lord that's the last lunatic tonight. My nerves are all unstrung. I wish I were a drinking man. I need a good stiff bracer. And tomorrow night ends it all. Ugh. I wish it were over tonight. Sometimes I think the game is not worth the candle. (rises) Bah! I'll not be beaten by a chit of a girl (looks at watch) Ten o'clock, she should be here, oh well, women never were known to be on time---(Louise knocks flat) (starts pause goes to flat) Who's there? (Louise knocks faintly) (unlocks door flat Louise enters he quickly looks door) You are on time.

Louise

Is that necessary (indicating locked door)

Silas

Yes. You are safe. You need have no fear.

Louise

(great storm as she entered getting fiercer till end of act) I cannot understand the cause or need for all this secrecy.

Silas

It shall all be explained. directly. Won't you be seated (points dees- chair R table C these simple directions are given with view of tent or small reps and small stage no scenery and little furniture, each scene and bus can be elaborated)

Louise

(sits) Thank you for Mr Black I must ask you to tell me of those important developments immediately. You have placed me in a very compromising position.

Silas

I have?

Louise

Yes. It was you who sent for me.

Silas

Do you always jump at things blindly? What evidence have you that I sent for you?

Louise

Deacon Tompkins came to my home at supper time and said you wanted me to call here at your house at ten o'clock tonight.

Silas

And you came.

Louise

Why you know I did.

Silas

And suppose Deacon Tompkins was lying. Suppose I did not send for you at all.

Louise

(rises) Is this another one of your games? If so I am going home.

Silas

(stops her) Don't please. I merely tell you this to show you how wonderfully convincing and incriminating circumstances can be at times.

Louise

I cannot understand their application in my case.

Silas

Their application applies in any case.

Louise

Please please, Mr Black, state the business that seemingly brought me here.

Silas

I have done this to show you how easily it lay in my power, were I so minded, understand I say; were I so minded to blacken and blast your reputation beyond---

Louise
Oh you would not dare.

Silas
Certainly I would not, but you are here in my house tonight after the hour of ten---and many things can happen.

Louise
(frightened) If you will be so kind as to stand out of my way I will rid your house of my presence immediately

Silas
(forces her back in chair) Sit down Miss Vernon. Don't act like a child. You are facing the gravest crisis of your life. One false move and you will live to regret it always if--ye I were not interested in your welfare do you think I would have sent for you to come here tonight?

Louise
Then you did send for me.

Silas
Of course I did.

Louise
Did you send for me to discuss my personality?

Silas
To discuss you and our new minister.

Louise
Si---Mr Morris, you have heard from him

Silas
I thought that would interest you

Louise
He is fighting in my behalf. Why shouldn't I show an interest?

Silas
Some men will give much for the women they love.

Louise
(rises) Sir you have no right---

Silas
But tut a little girl we old folks are not totally blind. But I didn't mention any names, did I? I wonder if a woman would do as much for the man she loved?

Louise
(rises) Is something wrong with Mr Morris, is he in trouble?

Silas
Granted that he is in trouble. He has started on a downward path that means ruin for his entire career.

Louise
If Mr. Morris needs me, I will do anything in power to help him.

Silas
I felt sure you would. I felt as if you could be reasoned with.

Louise
I---I do not understand you

Silas
It means sacrifice on your part. Could you be strong enough to sacrifice a few petty things you hold dear in order to save the man you---

Louise
If it is for Mr. Morris---yes.

Silas
I know far more about him than you do. I know the honorable family he comes from? A fine mother had set her heart upon a career in the ministry. It fired his own soul and became his life's work--- to lead repentant sinners unto the foot of the throne of the divine master.

Louise
It is a noble work.

Silas

Silas

And now that work is about to crumble into nothingness! A mother's heart broken and youth's fondest ambitions withered and gone.

Louise

I---I can prevent all of this?

Silas

You can. (takes folded paper hands to her) Here is his resignation from our church all written out and only waiting his signature

Louise

He will be forced to sign this?

Silas

Not forced. He will do it of his own free will and accord. Bro, Morris is a man of his word. Tomorrow expires his last day of grace. He has taken up the gauntlet in your behalf. You alone know how hopeless it is. The verdict of the board of trustees will not be changed.

Louise

You want me---you want me to---

Silas

Better one go down in ruin than that both should stagger against the rocks of destruction. Why stay and battle against a fate inexorable? Bro Morris must have for his wife a woman of the very best family. One commanding the highest respect. One toward whom the finger of scorn or scandal has never been pointed.

Louise

Don't, don't!

Silas

A foundling, a waif, a nobody could never be worthy of being a minister's wife. Motherhood is the best holy institution on earth. If this foundling knows not her own blood what chances she takes in the breed of children she places in her husband's arms?

Louise

Stop stop I say I have thought of that until it has almost driven me mad.

Silas

Whether Bro Morris returns or not is a question. Youth makes many rash promises. I know it was a woman, a woman as pretty as the first glimpse of breaking day but even that cannot make up for a ruined life and wrecked ambitions. His love was big it did much for her he loved. The question now is can she rise to the heights of supreme sacrifice to save the man she loves?

Louise

I am strong enough to make the sacrifice. (with effort)

Silas

You are a noble girl, worthy the love of any man,

Louise

I knew it was wrong for me to stay. I should have been strong and gone at first. (speaks listlessly) I thank God you have shown me the way before it was too late. I will leave tonight---and he will never see me again.

Silas

That and that only will simplify matters. See---I tear up this resignation (does so)

Louise

And all will be as before I---as it was before? You give me your word of honor?

Silas

I give you my word of honor as a man, and as a Christian.

Louise

Thank you, I believe you

Silas

Of course you will need money. I have prepared for that.

Louise

(surprised) You have?

Silas

Only in that if you are going tonight, which is best, you must have money for your journey and meet all your needs. I will---

Louise

No thank you. Money is not needed in carryout my decision. I leave and I leave alone.

Minister

(knocks on door quite a pause)

Silas

Quick out this door, through sitting room and out into the parlor and lock the door behind you. (leadin her to door R)

Louise

Why should I run as if I were a criminal?

Silas

Hush child---these circumstances of which I spoke awhile ago are stronger than ever, do not risk all my being childish, foolish (pushes her through door) & wait until I come for you (unlocks door steps back as Min enters) You, you here!

Min

(haggard and pale) Yes, why not? Don't stare at me as if I were a ghost.

Silas

(back down stage) You you (hand to throat) You startled me.

Min

Am I so changed? (stands with back to door almost crazy in this scene by steady and deadly calm)

Silas

No I was merely thinking that was all

Min

Did you think I would fail to come back, fail to keep my word?

Silas

I know you would, that is why I prepared---

Min

(quickly) What?

Silas

That your board of trustees are still of the same mind.

Min

I expected as much, especially since the board happens to be you

Silas

Then why come to me?

Min

You are the man with whom I have to deal

Silas

You failed in your mission to the city? (anxiously)

Min

Yes I failed. And even if success were possible your detectives who shadowed me day and night would have spoiled all. Silas Black you are not human you are a fiend.

Silas

Sir!

Min

The wells of your hate go deeper than even I can fathom. I have studied and studied and puzzled on it until my brain was on fire. I fought until the fight was useless, and then I came back to the fountain head.

Silas

What do you want of me?

Min

You and I are going to talk this matter over. (locks door, puts key in pocket) In the privacy of your home we are going to come to an understanding. (comes down more life now)

Silas

Do it quickly then, for I am tired and wish to retire.

Min

Sit down, sit down Mr Black and listen to me sit down I say. (he sits desk R) There is no need mincing matters or going into details "we both know this case from every angle, but perhaps what you didn't know was that I was in love with the woman in the case.

Silas

I might have surmised as much

Min

That puts a different phase on the matter, doesn't it?

Silas

Your love affairs are no concern of mine.

Min

No, but they make the incentive the stronger. I love this woman as woman was never loved before. Take her away from me and it will be like putting the sun at mid day behind a dark cloud. I love her I tell you and the woman I love you are befouling and besmirching her reputation, making her name a byword a creature to mock and scorn.

Silas

When you dance you must always expect to pay the fiddler.

Min

That is why I travelled one thousand miles to be here tonight.

Silas

Is that meant as a threat?

Min

I came here to demand justice at your hands, justice for the woman I love. I ask nothing for myself, but she must be righted. Her good name ~~set-~~ must be restored.

Silas

Will you please tell me how?

Min

My retracting your lying stories. By herding your board of trustees together and telling them the truth.

Silas

It is the truth, Bro Morris that makes facts of those lies.

Min

You lie! (Silas rises Min comes close to him) Do you hear me? You lie!

Silas

You are all unstrung, you are not yourself Bro Morris go home to bed and talk it over with me tomorrow.

Min

No we talk and settle tonight. Silas Black you ever leave this room until we come to an agreement.

Silas

Your agreement?

Min

No, man to man. What any man would do for another if he had one speck of humanity in his heart. I am appealing to all that is good, to all that is best in you. You cannot, you shall not do this infamous wrong.

Silas

Man, you are crazy, what you ask is impossible.

Min

But you can make it possible and you will. I can here tonight for that purpose without that woman life to me is worthless.

Silas

Would you dare---

Min

I dare anything for toehwoman I love. For the last time I ask you will you be man enough to speak out and save a woman's honor? Answer me---

Silas

With my last breath I defy you

Min

Then the results be upon your own head. I came here tonight with murder in my heart. I tried you in the court of man to man and you proved your self to be the cur you have always acted. You are not fit to live. You have taken my life away from me, now I take yours (draws pistol Silas cowers in fear)

Louise

(runs from R in between holding up pistol arm) Don't! for God's sake Will, don't (his arm lowers) Would you stain your hand with blood?

Min

You, you here (lowers arm to side) No, not now.

Silas

Let us hope this little farce is ended.

Min

(as if to himself) You here, you here?

Louise

It is all easily explained Will I---

Min

No no not now. My head is all in a whirl. You here in Silas Black's house at the hour of midnight. I can't understand it. You and Silas Black

Louise

Will will let me explain

Min

No Oh God (gun falls to floor hands clench and both fists pressed to face) Not now not now (shudders arms fall to side struggles for mastery laughs hysterically) Bro Black draw up my resignation and I will sign it tomorrow night---the end of the thirty days (as if to self as exits flat listlessly) The end of everything, the end of life. (unlocks door, exits*)

Louise

(stands as if stone, just beginning to realize the thoughts that were in his mind)

Silas

Still more of those little circumstances I told you about.

Louise

(looks at him a moment then swiftly out flat slamming door)

Silas

(pause then locks door flat looks off L examines window then turns down light) I wonder what the outcome will be? I don't like to have my life threatened. Oh well all is safe and shishape I guess I'll retire to pleasant dreams (blows out light stumbles as he exits right) Damn't!

Bud

(storm now a howling hurricane, thunder and lightning but not enough to drown action of play enters window lightening as he enters mask over face old clothes on use flash light exits L dull muffled explosion as of safe being blown rushes on L out window)

Silas

(enter R in bathrobe, runs off L) Quick Thad light lamp quick. Lightth lamp.

Thad

(lights lamp)

Silas

(enter L with empty strong box fairly screaming,

It's gone It's gone!

Thad

What's gone?

Silas

Burglars have broken open my safe and my most precious documents have been stolen.

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

(MIN DISCOVERED RISE READING L BOOK FALLS IN LAP. LOOKS CU INTO SPACE. SPREADS ELBOWS ON KNEES CHIN IN HANDS)

Mat

(enters R) (lights low) Why, William, all alone?

Min

I don't feel a great deal like company

Mat

Don't you want the light turned up

Min

Not if you please Mattie it feels resting the way it is.

Mat

(R to Min hand on his shoulder) You poor boy

Min

It's mighty good Mattie to have one friend---just like you (places hand on hers on his shoulder looks up at her)

Mat

You need more than a friend you need a mother.

Min

(softly) My mother is dead.

Mat

I didn't know that. You don't know how sorry I am.

Min

She died while I was away in the city. She was the most wonderful mother in the world.

Mat

All mothers are, William.

Min

There is an old saying and it must be true that God couldn't be everywhere at once, so he made mothers (strokes her hand)

Mat

That- I had a boy once---and had he lived he would be almost as old as you

Min

Dear old mother Mat.

Mat

Always call me that, Will. Let me take the place if only in a humble way of that most wonderful mother in the world.

Min

You already have, and no one can ever take it away from you. (they both exit)

Joe

(enters C with Bud) I want you to carry Mr. Morris' trunk over to the other room.

Bud

What do you think I am an elephant?

Joe

How's that?

Bud

Only elephants carry trunks. Do you see any ivory about me (wears hat)

Joe

I don't know, Bud. Take off your hat, let's have a look.

Bud

(plays with locket of Silas which he now uses for a watch fob) I'm going to kiss you.

Joe

You're what?

Bud

Not a what a kiss. (grabs her, bell rings)

(they take up stage)

Mat

(enter L ith Thad) Your conduct needs no explanation deacon. I am firm in my resolve.

Thad

But Matilda

Silas

(enters behind Thad) I came here to transact the most disagreeable piece of business of my life, to do a thing that will cause me great pain/

Thad

I was jest a telling her we had a christian duty to perform.

Silas

Would it be possible for me to see the minister?

Mat

It would. (exit R)

Thad

Its a regular homret's nest, Silas.

Silas

I won't be long in removing the sting. They are altogether too upish to suit me. I'll take them down a peg or two.

Thad- Mat

(enter R followed by minister takes down) Here is your man.

Silas

I suppose you know what night this is?

Min

I do?

Silas

I believe you said that if within thrity days you did not disapperve the charges our board made against Miss Louise Vernon, that you would resign from the pastorate of our church?

Min

I did.

Silas

Of course that was not needed as charges were going to be prepared. You simply simplified matters.

Min

(smiles) The say it is an ill wind that blows notbody any good.

Silas

It deed not seemto be very serious to you
SARLHAP

Min

Serious? When you are tearing down the- anddestroying the work of my whole life-----I am simply smiling to keep back the tears.

Silas

That is to be deplored, but duty must be done (takes out paper) I have here a written resignation, all it needs is your signature. That is provided you have not the proff to disapprove those charges.

Min

I have not.

Silas

Then of course there is nothin to be done but sgng (Bud down L Joe next Thad down A then Silas R or table C Min L Mat little behind)

Mat

My boy, my boy (X to him arms around him)

Min

Don't mother Mat don't make it harder for me than it is. (places her gently aside she works back to first position behind Thad and Silas)

Bud

(finger to lips plays with locket seeminly to attract attention)

Silas

You claim to be a man, a thoroughbred, let's see what color you are inside. You gave your word as a pastor and a man---(throws paper on table)
Put your name to his resignation and prove that you are a man (Louise appears)
C Silas holds out pen Min grabs pen starts to sign.

Louise

(down grabs paper just as he is signing) Stop! You must not sign this resignation.

Min

Louise!

Silas

The devil! (Min and Silas both step back Louise behind table)

Louise

This is all a fabric a tissue of falsehoods and lies.

Silas

Why did you come back? You broke your word (snarls)

Louise

Woman's instinct. It told me you were lying to me. See! (tears up paper)
I tear your lie into a thousand pieces.

Min

Louise, what does this mean?

Louise

It means that some deep game is being played here. What it is I don't know, Silas Black sent for me to come to his house at ten o'clock last night. (to Min) You found me there. He forced home upon me the truth that if I stayed and you failed in your proof that I would ruin you, break your heart as well as your mother's. Through him I consented to go away---on his word of honor that you would not be forced to resign your church. He even tore up the real resignation.

Silas

A very prettily planned tableau, but still I hold the trump card. You have cleared yourself behind a woman's skirts, Mr Minister, but this woman will pay the penalty just the same. She shall be branded a common woman of the streets and this night, by action of the board turned out of the church an outcast, a nobody.

Min

(makes spring toward Silas) You fiend!

Louise

(steps in between to Will) Wait! (faces Silas) She will be turned out of the church provided she refuses to speak out and clear herself.

Silas

You wouldn't dare think what is at stake.

Louise

I shall clear my good name in spite of all

Silas

I don't care to hear ti then as far as I'am concerned the matter is ended, Come on Deacon (starts)

Min

(stops him) If you don't Silas. You are going to stay and hear this thing out.

Silas

I'd like to know who will stop me?

Min

(takes off coat) If you're a better man than I am you can go.

Silas

(after slight pause) Let's stay Silas.

Min

Now Miss Vernon, tell your story.

Louise

You know most of it already. At least you know my history. ---a noh

When I reached womanhood I realized the crowning joy of all living was to be denied me---a home and children. Until I knew the blood that flowed in my veins I knew I should be denied that supreme happiness forever. At the beginning of this summer it was announced that Mr. Morris was coming here as our Pastor. It wasn't then I met Mr. Wilton that lady killer drummer you spoke of. He wasn't a drummer at all, but a detective. I told him my story and upon his advice and want to the city, and placed my case in the hands of his firm. It fitted in with another case they were working on, appeared to be the same, and upon their advice I stayed. My whereabouts were to be known to no one. I was sworn to secrecy. I took an oath to that effect, I know break that oath and lose my all in telling you that I spent the summer in the great city, not as Silas Black claims, as a common woman of the streets, but engaged in righting the wrong placed upon me by parents I know not of. (takes papers from breast) Here are papers and letters proving every statement I have made. You keep your church Mr. Morris, I have cleared my name, but I have lost much.

Bud

(playing with fob) Do you know, Louise, I don't think you've lost very much

Silas

What affair of yours is this, you fool?

Bud

In fact, I'm willin' to bet you have won all along the line

Silas

This is all a concocted scheme (sees locket steps stares) I may have failed in doing what I thought was right, but I'll send one little boy to the penitentiary for his fun. My house was entered last night, my safe blown open and robbed---and there stands the thief (points to Bud)

Bud

(playing with fob) What proof have you that I am the thief?

Silas

That fob, that locket that hangs from your watch

Bud

You lie! That is mine I bought it in Chicago.

Silas

You lie! It is mine. I have had it for years I put it in my strong box last night and locked it in my safe.

Bud

Is there any mark by which you can identify it?

Silas

Yes, it has the letters D S engraved on the back

Bud

(holds out locket) I ask you all to bear witness to what he has said. This is his locket I did steal from it his safe last night.

Silas

And on the back the letters D S

Bud

(opens locket hands to Louise) And on the inside the picture of---

Louise

(opens her locket) The very likeness of the one found on me in the basket my mother.

Bud

Yes, and there stands your---

Louise

My father!

Omnes

Her father.

Bud

Naw, her father's murderer- (Silas goes for gun covers him) No you don't, Silas Its the commarade stunt for you and be quick about it or I'll let daylight through you. On with 'em. (puts up hands) Now don't you folke get excited, I know what I am asking you ll just stand aside, don't interfere. (gets behind Silas takes away gun then behind him) Decorate the gentleman---for distinguished sculduggery (Joe does so)

Min

What is the meaning of all this?

Bud

(thumb in vest, turns out officer's badge) Detective Government liscensed. Burn's man. Thats my business in the city (Silas makes move to Bud who has been carelss bud quickly covers) Getting restless Si? The Burns agency has been on this case for years. Murder twenty four years ago of Joh Sloan by his pal to obtain ten thousand in cash. John Sloan, son of Major Jean Sloan, veteran of the Civil War and walthy influential and highly respected citizen of New Orleans La. This pal in his robbery obtained a copy of a will thus learning the entire fortune of Major Sloan about \$750,000 in case of his death was to revert to his son Joh, but in the event of said son dying at an earlier date, the entire estate was to pass into the possession of the daughter in-law. Now then the pal begins a frantic hunt to find a wife. She is in a saniatrium in demented conditoon. One nght she stole away taking the child with her, but strange to say it left no loop hole for the law to creep in and contest Major Sloan died the night before she left and had never bhanged his will A short time after the body of a woman was found in the river, and claimed as Mrs Sloan, but the child was never heard from All we had to go by was the locket stolen at the time of the muder, and the locket worn by the baby when last seen to be known. In some way this pal learned that the baby was in this town, the adopted foundling of old Daddy Vernon. He immediately took up his residence in this town to finish his crime---to destroy the life of that foundling or failing in that to give her a dishonored name. I can remember now the many narrow escapes from death Louise has had. And then to top it all off, finding he could not kill he resorts to dastardly slander to drive her away from home to a life of shame. Silas Black you are that pal - have all the necessary documents right here. (takes papers from pocket) Let me read you the last of that will " Having no other relatives, in the event of my son dying at earlier date, and his wife likewise, my entire estate shall revert to their daughter, Dorothy Sloan---but in the event of her death without issue---thats the reason why he didn't want Lo ise to marry-- For if she at any time bring dishonor upon the fair name of Sloan in the event of such my entire estate both personal and reall shall revert to my son John's true and noble friend, Silas Black.

Min

Lou

Louise

Bill.

Joe

Bud.

Bud

Joe, little girl! I mean big gal!

Thad

Come on, Silas.

Silas

Where to?

Thad

To the calaboose.